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AN
OBLIQUE VIEW
of the ^{TK} ~~Pam 68~~
Grand Conspiracy,
against
Social Order ;
or,
A CANDID INQUIRY,

tending to shew what part

The ANALYTICAL, the MONTHLY, the CRITICAL
REVIEWS,

and

The NEW ANNUAL REGISTER,

have taken in that

CONSPIRACY.

By the AUTHOR of
A CONCISE SKETCH of the INTENDED REVOLUTION.

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P R E F A C E.



THE Writer of the following pages is one of the numerous class of Englishmen, who from the very first disapproved of the French Revolution. He disliked the deceitful metaphysical principles of licentiousness by which it was effected, because he thought them big with the destruction of the best social ties, and by no means equally so of the worst.

The Actors appeared full grown athletics in ambition, but deficient in sound thinking, and extremely ignorant of the nature of man. He cannot conceive it was ever intended notwithstanding it has been so often avowed in theory, that the *people* should actually govern *themselves*, in France.—He is of opinion that there never was a state in which the multitude governed, nay he thinks it in the present state of human nature, an absolute impossibility, except in the sense that will by and by be explained. It is the happy appointment of providence, that ignorance and vice

cannot *long* over-rule wisdom and virtue. Artful and wicked men have frequently in the course of hereditary succession tyrannised for *a time* over their fellow creatures, and men of the same description, have sometimes governed by *means* of the *multitude*, but the *multitude* were certainly then as much *misgoverned*, as they are governed under the most regular establishment. The mock majesty of the people has generally been exalted only to be made a puppet of.—Some light has been thrown upon this subject, by the melancholy experiment which has recently been so rashly tried in France. Who will now deny that the multitude were raised into action, by an artful and powerful faction? that they have by faction been misled all through, and by it are sunk into their present most abject slavery? There can be no doubt but the general good of the of the people, ought as far as it is consistent with the peace of the world at large, to be universally the object of every government.

Perhaps the most popular government that can exist for any length of duration; and the best is *that*, where a representative aristocracy of talents, and *virtue originating from christian principles*, conduct themselves upon all arduous occasions, by the general opinion of the thinking part of the community, peaceably collected through the medium of the press; and in some instances, when the artifices of a faction have rendered the voice of that public organ indistinct, and dubious, by public meetings. A deficiency of virtue would detract from the equity of such a government; and a deficiency of talents from the soundness of its policy and its power.

The present government of England appears to be a good deal of this description; and its evils arise not so evidently from any hereditary mixture which it admits, for this prevents the introduction of much confusion, as from a deficiency of virtue. In France this deficiency has always of late been greater than in England, arising perhaps in a great measure from the corrupt state of religion, and the Revolution has increased it. Notwithstanding the extremely partial portraits of the the principle actors of this business, drawn by some designing conspirator in a book recently sold by Johnson,—nothing can be more certain than that the very worst men in France, have during the late commotions borne sway. A mind capable from recollection of grouping them, sees nothing but a wretched loathsome assemblage of Traitors, Atheists, Hypocrites, Tyrants, Robbers, Murderers, Self-murderers, and Regicides, destitute of all christian principles, and without any decent substitute by way of apology in its place. The little virtue that remained was undoubtedly compelled to conceal itself in the shade; and could find no safety even in retirement.

It is my private opinion however, which affords me consolation, that men of this description cannot remain long in their eminent situation, unless they can reduce the world to the degraded state into which it was sunk before the Christian Era.—Julius Cæsar's is in the estimation of all good men at this day, the character of an enormous villain; and Buonaparte and the French Directors merit the appellation no less for closing their eyes against those bright beams of ever-

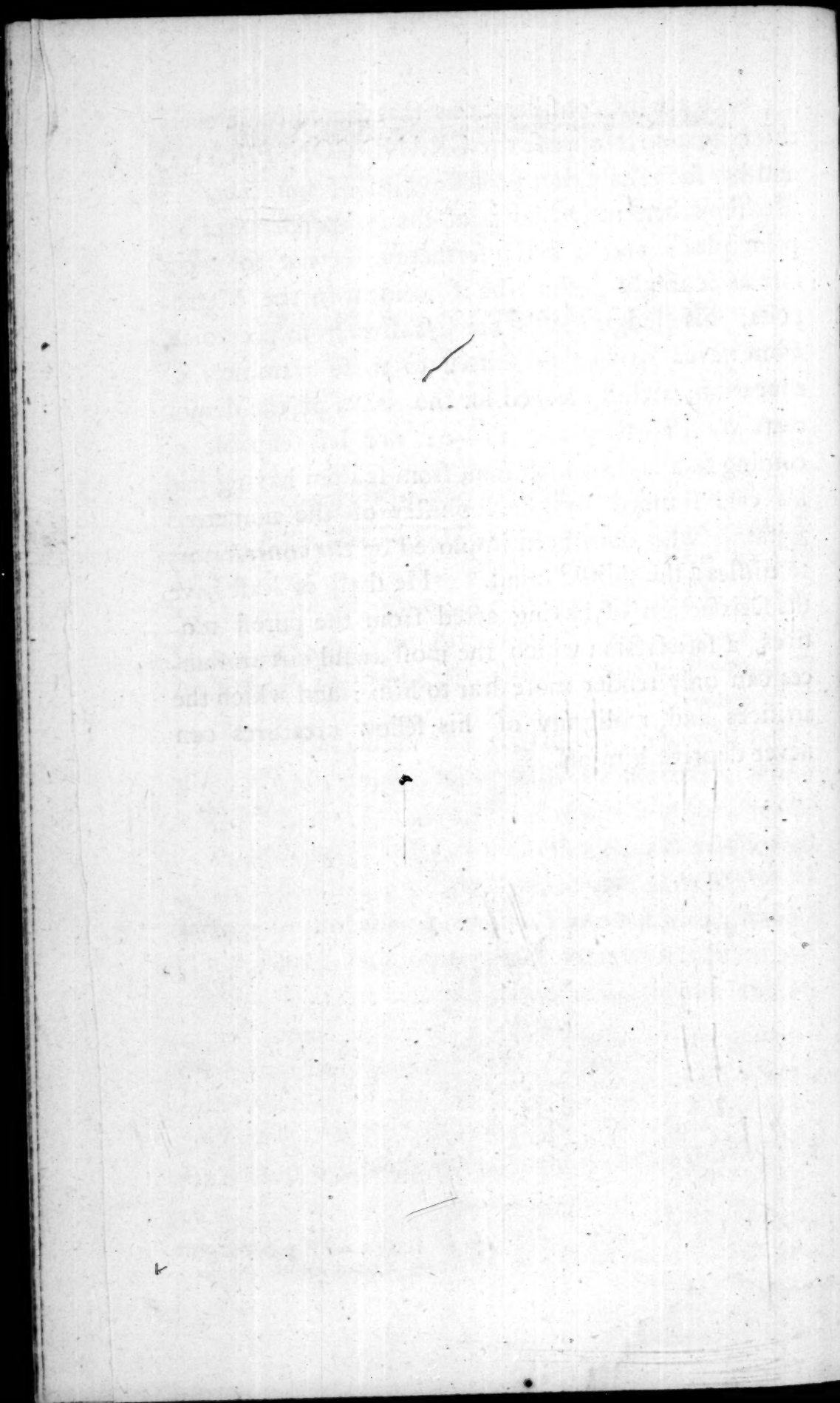
lasting truth which never shone upon the pagan murderer : for this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men choose darkness rather than light because their *deeds are evil*.

These considerations urge the writer to oppose every thing which has a tendency towards a Revolution in these Kingdoms. We are even at this present moment a people flourishing in commerce, and likely from the destruction of the commercial capitals by the war, and the crippled marine of the Continent, to become the manufacturers and carriers of the world, whenever it terminates ; and in this point of view, notwithstanding the ravings of Opposition, the present war will be more advantageous to Great-Britain than any, I except not one, that can be produced from the annals of history.

The discontented with regard to religion in these realms are the most ambitious of the sectarists who are divided, and sub-divided, *ad infinitum* in their opinions ; and the Atheists, who in the general massacres and confusion that must succeed, in case of a Revolution, would probably prevail. I know nothing more absurd than a hope that these heterogeneous characters would in their exaltation, produce any thing but additional discord and misery : the discontented in politics, are not much better agreed in their opinions relative to the form of government to be adopted, and the modes of its administration, the Anarchists would probably succeed first ; and what would result from Anarchy, only he who first raised a creation from it can tell.

Such are the considerations that should rouse every thinking man to oppose the GRAND CONSPIRACY, and by such the writer professes himself influenced.—He like others might boast of the independence of his principles ; and if his information be not so accurate as it might possibly be if resident in the Metropolis, his judgment is not less free from prejudice, from never having submitted to those trammels of education, artfully forged for the necks of the democrats by Pr—stley and Pr—e ; nor less capable of coming to a right conclusion, from seldom having had his ears stunned by the sophistry of the numerous agitators who have been employed by the conspirators to mislead the public mind. He shall at least have the satisfaction of having acted from the purest motives, a satisfaction which the most awful circumstances can only render more dear to him ; and which the artifices and malignity of his fellow creatures can never deprive him off.





AN

OBLIQUE VIEW, &c.

THE Year ninety-seven is marked by a variety of Publications of a very interesting complexion. They purport to develope from its first rise, a Conspiracy against the Christian Religion, against Monarchy ; and in short, against the present system of Society. * A number of literary characters professing themselves Philosophers, men it appears of unbounded ambition, insidiously determined upon the monstrous attempt ; and with an alacrity worthy of a better cause, almost before they were suspected, had not only infused their destructive principles into the minds even of the lowest of the people in France ; but by a variety of ramifications had given their system such an extent, that it was difficult for themselves to determine where the explosion would first take place.

It was soon observed that the purity of the christian system in this Kingdom, as well as the excellence of its Constitution, was likely to prove an invincible barrier to their romantic plans ; and though they had not

* Amongst the original Conspirators, we number D' Alembert, Voltaire, Diderot, Condorcet, Orleans, Mirabeau, Rochetouscoul, &c. &c.

at first the hardyhood to make us an offering of complete infidelity, yet we must have observed that * Socinianism was systematically encouraged to smoothen the road for Atheism in its most uncouth and cheerless form ; and that periodical Publications were as systematically arranged to libel the Constitution.

In truth the methods adopted to carry their scheme into execution have been extremely similar in all Countries. They † have contrived to deluge the Continent by a variety of Publications, sanctioned by the names of the ablest writers of the preceeding age, though generally written by themselves, in which their principles were dressed up by a meretricious elegance, partly concealed by an artful sophistry, indicating the infernal aid which appears to have been very profusely indeed bestowed upon them, and which in my opinion, clearly ascertains them to be the disciples of an infernal master. In this country, they have in a wonderful manner possessed themselves of the ‡ influence of the

* This appears to have been settled in the year 1773, when Dr. Pr— they WAS CONSULTING WITH THE FRENCH PHILOSOPHERS, it should seem the Doctor was fully aware of the opposition which the conspiracy was likely to meet with from the religious of this kingdom.

† It is a well known fact, that Hawkers and Pedlars of every description, have throughout Europe been employed to disseminate cheap Editions of Sedition ; 20,000 of Paine's Rights of Man, were circulated in this way through the North of Ireland ; and one society ordered 12,000 copies of Paine's Letter to Dundas to be printed and distributed throughout Great-Britain : a Gentleman in the road from Leeds to Liverpool was observed distributing doses of republican poison, in a paroxysm of zeal from under the seat of his carriage, to poor children without stockings ; and the celebrated Mr. H—— not far from Huntingdon, put not a few Ladies and Gentlemen in bodily fear by gallantly galloping up to their carriages, and popping a blue roll of sedition through the window.

‡ The Writer knows booksellers so completely under this influence, or such favourers of the conspiracy, that they have refused to sell books in opposition to it, and some of them so bad as to retain them SECRETED purposely to prevent the sale.

press to such a degree that they can at any time bring forwards the Publications of their party, and in a great measure repress those written by private Individuals, who alarmed by the dangerous pre-eminence they have in this instance obtained, are bold enough in compliance with the dictates of conscience, to take up arms against that degrading mental tyranny, which, notwithstanding their parade in favour of liberty, they are obviously wishing to establish. This has been effected at an immense expence, in some instances probably by bribery, by possessing themselves of the *principal reviews* and *other periodical Publications*, in the sale of which the booksellers are much interested: as well as by establishing circulating Libraries and academies for the direct purpose of overturning what they are pleased sarcastically to term prejudices, in other words their intention is to pervert right principles.

One would think that as much mischief as could have been calculated upon, even by the malignity of devils, has already been the result of this destructive conspiracy throughout the most fertile and flourishing country in Europe. Even the appearance of religion has been banished, the social compact has been violated in the most atrocious manner with impunity, and injustice sanctioned by law: The scaffold hath been stained by royal blood: Their venerable Priests have been grossly insulted and murdered, for adhering with christian fortitude to their religion: Their children have been impaled, and shocking it is even to relate, their women have been held in *requisition* to a forced prostitution.

As the hopes of the Conspirators *rest much upon secrecy*, they have taken some pains to prove that no plot has ever actually existed in any degree of forwardness in this Kingdom. The earnestness with which they have laboured this point, and the earnestness with which they laboured to carry the very same point no very long time ago, in *Ireland*, affords of itself just grounds of suspicion: and when we advert to the declaration of a young gentleman who was actually executed for the plot in North-Britain, and maturely weigh his confession, *made with eternity full in view: When we learn from the trials of those who by some have been considered as acquitted felons, and by others as the rankest traitors; *that secret small committees were empowered to transact a business of importance, which would shortly call for the support of the whole corresponding and affiliated societies*"; and when we recollect the expectations that were at that time abroad amongst people of a *certain discription*, we are apt to bless God for those military associations which so happily took place, from a full conviction, that an explosion was providentially checked, which would otherwise have terminated in commotions and bloodshed.

We have no occasion to advert to the recent proofs before our eyes, to be convinced that a dangerous conspiracy existed in England so early as the year ninety-four, and that in very great forwardness; we have already been indulged with the further privilege of contemplating

* Watt's confession—the critical Review endeavoured to invalidate this strong testimony, but it will not be very difficult to prove this review deficient, even in veracity as will be shewn in the Second Part of this enquiry.

in a great measure uninjured, the *advances* of this odious, and destructive conspiracy against social order. Every step has been marked by a disingenuous sophistry, strongly characteristic of its infernal origin. The very first effort to oppose its progress, an act of justice taken in self-defence, was artfully represented to Europe, as the conspiracy of *Kings against liberty* ; * and one circumstance that developed the *connecting chain*, and shewed the *extent* of the *real conspiracy*, was " that all the democratic chronicles, throughout every country were found to have been engaged, almost at the same moment, in one foul malignant and egregious calumny." The advocates for truth on the other hand, unarmed and unconnected, were surprised by the unexpected advance of this formidable Phalanx ; and of course were, in consequence of these two circumstances, unable to withstand the first attack. In point of religion, and politics, it must likewise be acknowledged, that they were under the necessity of attempting their first stand on slippery ground ; for the Roman persuasion is at best a mixture of heavenly truths, with the most deplorable falsehoods ; and the government of France, though the people were a cheerful and contented race, had confessedly its blemishes. From the general profligacy of manners, which under these circumstances had prevailed, the infection of atheism, and rebellion spread in proportion to the malignity of their nature ; and the conspiracy, even before its dreadful explosion, consisted of a prodigious number of

* The Anti-jacobin has already bestowed a few wholesome structures upon the conspirators by which this point in the grand scheme is well elucidated.

Republicans, to whose birth the American Revolution had contributed; of the corresponding and affiliated clubs, the immediate offspring of the original conspiracy: Of atheists amongst all ranks lately converted from practical to professed infidelity, by the conspirators publications, circulated with this very view; and lastly, of that wretched group to be met with in every populous community, chiefly denoted by their profligacy and consequent poverty. Such was the assemblage, which headed by a few Philosophic courtiers, more properly denominated abandoned traitors, burst out in one day into anarchy; with a considerable effusion of human blood, took the strongest fortresses in the kingdom; overturned the laws, made the mild and merciful monarch tremble on his throne; and at once sapped all the foundations of government, and the established Religion.

We have had the privilege of observing likewise the conduct of the conspirators of our *own Country*, upon this eventful, and instructive occasion. No longer able to conceal their impolitic and savage joy, they hailed under the appellation of the dawn of liberty, what we term rank injustice, the forerunner of worse than Egyptian bondage, in swilled indecent merriment, which only shewed how nearly the self-denominated Philosopher is related to the brute. It was then that genuine humanity shuddered in every country, at the beginning of these dire contentions, for she is always tender to human kind; and afraid of intrusting the sword into hands of any thing but law. The self denominated Philosophers, were it seems even in our own country of a different opinion;

yet even they were aware that some souls who had imbibed the principles of eternal justice, from a *purser* source than the *tainted one of socinianism*, would indig-
nantly burst the shackles by which the public mind had already been so artfully manacled; and in spite of all the insidious efforts of conspiracy, would independently think for themselves. It was this secret foreboding which almost immediately called forth the **mingled rhetoric and sophistry*, of their most artful partizans to tinsel over the already enormous crimes of the first convention; and it was this secret foreboding that brought the *connecting chain*, of the conspirators once more into public view; and shewed us their whole corps of REVIEWS in *wily connexion*, incautious enough to commit themselves in this desperate undertaking. It was impossible that an enquiring mind should not immediately recognize the league; and it would have been treachery to society; treason to our country; desertion from christianity; and a libel on all genuine patriotism, not to have exposed it.

From this conviction I took the liberty to advert to the more prominent features of this diabolic scheme so early as the year ninety-four, in a small pamphlet entitled a "Concise Sketch of the Intended Revolution," and then endeavoured to attract the notice of my countrymen to the conspiracy, principally with a view of encouraging the military associations, which at

* The reader may examine the Catalogues, about that period when Mr. Mac Intosh made himself so ridiculous by most rhetorically endeavouring to make sacrilege into patriotism, Robbery into justice; and the moon into green cheese.

that time so providentially took place. To that pamphlet,—to Reflections on the Irish Conspiracy, printed for Sewell and Wright,—to the Reports of the Secret Committees,—to the State Trials; and to their own impudent Publications,—I refer the Reader for further information relative to the corresponding societies, and the general progress of the conspiracy, and mean to confine myself at present to investigate more particularly what part the periodical Publications to which I have already alluded, appear to have taken; and how far they are involved in this nefarious business. If the charge should be found valid, from this investigation, it will be natural to draw a few interesting conclusions.

A scrutiny I should apprehend not very nice will enable us to determine what share the Monthly, the Analytical, the Critical Reviews; and the New Annual Register have had in this extraordinary scheme. As Voltaire's favourite rule was, *strike but conceal the hand*; we may naturally expect a great affectation of candour and liberality; and even an appearance sometimes of arguing against *the cause*, and their favourite writers to be thrown as a veil over the real design of his disciples. If however we are so far enabled to see through this disguise as to ascertain "that writers in any degree able, who are in the scheme, have more than their share of praise apportioned to them: while those on the other hand are slightly noticed, their merits extenuated, and their principles uninformedly opposed, and sometimes with great art-

tifice: if we find that the *strongest arguments* of the conspirators are brought forward *again and again* with approbation, while those of their opponents are kept out of view, and their weakest only admitted to notice, most generally with as good answers likewise attached to them, as the Reviewers are able to give; we shall have then some cause to conclude our surmises right. If we should be further confirmed in these, by observing that all these Reviews are in one interest; and *artfully arranged* to further one and the same cause, that the Analytical, for instance, is ingeniously calculated to influence men of a *sanguine temperament*, by dealing in bold sarcastic assertions, while the Monthly is addressed to men of more *reasoning*, and less *hasty minds*, yet evidently on the same side of the question; and that the Critical *affects* to differ from these in *religious principles*, merely to administer the same political figments with greater success, to men, whom they know prejudiced against Unitarians, we shall not probably hesitate long in making up our minds on this important subject.

In the Analytical Review of a book entitled, *a Convention the only means to save us from ruin*, for January, 1794, page 79, we have the following extraordinary extracts, "Pitt succeeds Fox, Fox succeeds Pitt, and Pitt succeeds Fox again, but the *national grievances* remain *unredressed*; and the *change of a Minister* produces nothing but a transfer of pensions from one *minion* to another; and a fresh *accumulation of national burdens*. Parties are only a succession of

birds of prey, of which the *people are the Banquet*, confide therefore in *neither*, the means of security are in *your own hands*; and it *remains for you alone to exert them*; if your life were menaced by assault would it not be ridiculous to request *your neighbour* to discharge your musket for you? * * * * *

Friends and Fellow Citizens, the great source of the evil is here, the people of Europe, in general, have as little connexion with their respective governments, except indeed as they *are the objects of their plunder*, as they have with the governments of China and Japan.—Page 80.”—What immediately follows is too inflammatory for insertion. * * * * *

* * * “ Friends, Countrymen, and Fellow Citizens ! These truths I have laid before you with boldness, simplicity, and zeal ; I am one of you ; and therefore neither have nor can have an interest separate from yours ; if I have held up to you a gloomy picture of your situation it is no more than the circumstances of the times sufficiently warrant, the *remedy is in your own hands* ; if you do not apply it you will only have yourselves to blame, for the ruin which must follow.”

As Mr. Gerrald's Publication appears to be written with that force and neatness of expression, which too frequently varnishes falshood with the appearance of truth,—we find the *Reviewers* giving the nation a *second edition* of his *strong assertions*, by inserting them in their Review, which was likely to be much more *extensively* read, as they very well knew, than the original publication. This must be allowed an ingeni-

ous mode of propagating sedition; especially, when it is recommended by them as "an article full of many *bold truths*,"—the *design* of the publication is I think obvious from the extracts; and the *design* of the Reviewers in recommending it, cannot surely be easily misunderstood.

We find also in the same volume, a curious extract from Dr. Kippis' Fast Sermon,—inserted probably with the same design, as the extracts already quoted,—which in many points of view merits once more the public attention.——“ From what has been said (observes the Doctor) The disturbers of the world (meaning evidently, as appears by the sequel, the conductors of all the established governments in Europe, but especially, Emperors and Kings) might see that they cannot effectually fight against God. I say they might see this; but that they will not in fact attend to so important a truth, is much to be apprehended. They will probably push forwards their impious projects, (*to crush the conspiracy we are tracing,*) but if they obstinately persist in their injustice and their iniquity, let them remember that their attempts *shall* sooner or later be confounded.* While they are eagerly striving to crush the interests of mankind they *shall* in the conclusion contribute to their *establishment* and *increase*. It is not to be expected that the voice of preachers should be regarded amidst the madness of ambition, and the rage of

* Dr. Pr—stley has likewise told us THAT A TRAIN IS LAID.

war: but if we could be heard we would say as loudly as possible, be wise, *oh! ye governors*, be instructed *oh! ye warriors* of the earth, know that with your utmost efforts you cannot finally triumph over the cause of honour, rectitude, and religion." *Meaning, Reader, the infernal conspiracy against social order, the prominent features of which are now completely before us all.* This is modestly termed a very judicious discourse, by the *Reviewer*, probably the very same gentleman that wrote it.—

One more instance I will adduce, that we may fully convict this Review of Treason, from the mouth at least of three witnesses, and the last shall be a female, after which I shall consign it to the nation, that its demerits may be fairly appreciated. "We must get rid, says Mrs. Wollstonecraft, of all the notions drawn from the wild traditions of *original sin*, the *eating of the apple*, the theft of Prometheus, the opening of Pandoras box, and other *fables* too tedious to enumerate, on which Priests have erected their tremendous structures of impositions, to persuade us that we are naturally inclined to evil, *

* * * * *
 one principle of action is sufficient, "respect thyself," (here we see the whole drift of the conspiracy, with respect to religion, now let us see what is to be done with the state.) It is not paradoxical to assert that the social virtues are nipt in the bud by the very laws of society, (this expression is decisive, let us however examine a few more,) *

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thus much appears certain, that a State will infallibly grow old and feeble, if *hereditary riches support hereditary rank*, under any description, but when *courts*, and *promogeniture* are done away ; and simple and equal laws are established, what is to prevent each generation from retaining the vigour of youth ?”

“ In contemplating the French revolution, (say the Reviewers, in their critique upon this brutal Publication) it is not easy to dilate the mind to a full conception of the magnitude of the event. *Narrow Intellectuals* incapable of embracing the *whole extent of the subject*, (meaning evidently the whole extent of the conspiracy,) are lost amidst a confused mass of facts, rising in succession with unexampled rapidity. *Feeble minds*, born away by the *instinctive impression* of the moment, are overpowered with horror, at the barbarities which have blackened the scene ; and while they ought to think deeply, can only sigh and lament. The selfish and bigoted—two pretty numerous classes— can only fix their eyes upon those points of the passing scene, which excite alarm for the safety of the *ancient, splendid, and lucrative system of superstition and tyranny*. It is not from such spectators, that the world is to expect that *comprehensive survey*, of the recent events of France, which can alone lead to a just estimate of the present interests of neighbouring nations ; or to a *judicious accommodation* of their public measures, to the *circumstances of the times*. Such *enlarged views* and *wise conclusions*, can only be the result of a diligent and accurate examination of facts ; carried on under the direction of a *sound judgment* well exercised in the ope-

ration of tracing back effects to their causes ; an enlightened understanding, amply supplied with correct ideas* on the principles of policy and morals ; and a liberal spirit, unconfined by national prejudices, and warmed by the steady flame of universal philanthropy. *Furnished with these qualifications*, for the undertaking in a degree, which in a woman may appear to male vanity highly astonishing. Mrs. Wollstonecraft has begun an " Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution," which from the *present specimen* of the work, will, we have no doubt, attract the admiration of the critic and command the serious attention of the moralist and statesman. As a production of genius, it has an energy of diction, and a richness of imagery which in a work on a less important subject might be entitled to the first praise. But its chief excellence which will doubtless recommend it to the diligent perusal of all who interest themselves in public transactions, is, that it discusses the subject with a *degree of impartiality*, scarcely at present to be expected, with a *solidity and depth of thought*, which notwithstanding the odium that has of late fallen up-

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* The Critic has treated us further with the following specimens of DISTINCT and CORRECT IDEAS from this lady's production, " Perhaps the great advantage of eloquence, is that impressing the results of thinking on minds alive, only to emotion, it gives wings to the slow foot of reason, and fire to the cold labours of investigation,"——and again, " nevertheless in treating with the nobles, the angles of pride, which time alone could have smoothed silently away, were perhaps too rudely knocked off, for the folly of distinctions was rapidly wearing itself out, and would probably have melted gradually before the rational opinions that were continually gaining ground, fructifying the soil as they dissolved, instead of which it was drifted by a hurricane to spread destruction around as it fell."——
The reader will probably see nothing bombast in all this.

on philosophy, we will venture to call truly philosophical, and which will not fail to render the work highly useful in promoting the most important interests of human society"*——or in other words the GRAND CONSPIRACY AGAINST SOCIAL ORDER, and every thing really dear to man.

The reader will be kind enough to recollect that the question before us is not whether the writers here brought forwards, wrote with a design to overturn the present system of society, for nothing can be more evident than that they did; but the question is simply whether the Review is to be considered as discouraging or encouraging their design; as tending to depress or further the grand scheme; and upon this question he cannot long be in doubt. Let him make up his mind, and if the conspiracy stands as naked to his view as it does to mine, let him determine to oppose it with the firmness of a man, and a christian. We will now turn our eyes for a few moments to the conduct of this Review towards publications of a different complexion, from those to which we have already adverted.

In the Review of Owen's Retrospect, a publication by no means designed to encourage the conspiracy, it is astonishing with what artifice the extracts are related; and made subservient even to the cause against which it was evidently † written, and in the subsequent

* Analytical Review, vol. 20, page 339.

† Ibid.

1794, Vol. 18, page 341.

article the reader may have an opportunity of observing the adopted mode of dissecting a real genuine friend to the constitution.*

The Critique upon Mr. Clapham's Volunteer Sermon, is so highly characteristic of the design of the Review as to merit insertion. " This preacher *strongly impressed* with the general alarm which has spread through the country, *somewhat prematurely takes it for granted*, (as others it must be allowed have done, who have better opportunities of being informed than a *country vicar* can be supposed to possess) that the *subversion of the constitution*, has been beyond all contradiction, not the concealed object, but avowed design of many associations holden throughout the kingdom," *ecce* here, Reader, the arrogance and impudence of an illiterate Socinian priest,—but examine at the same time, the drift of the critique, and you cannot fail to observe the subtilty and design of an artful conspirator.

May this abominable Review be publicly attended to its execution by the Priests, who have too long abused the good sense of Englishmen, and who were educated under the auspices of Pr——y and Pr——e, for the avowed purpose of enslaving the minds of their fellow country men, to a destructive set of principles by which the venerable constitution of our ancestors, was intended to be gradually subverted.

* Analytical Review, 1794, Vol. 18 page 345.

As my original design was to confine my remarks upon the Reviews in question, to the compass of a small pamphlet, with a view of adducing a few instances in point to their conviction, rather than the whole mass of evidence which their seditious critiques contain ; I shall, to avoid prolixity, now turn my attention to the Critical Review, being perfectly satisfied, that if I only can lead my countrymen into the same train of investigation, as I have myself adopted, they will assuredly arrive at the same conclusion.

I threw out an intimation at an early part of this inquiry, " that the Critical Review's affected opposition to Socinian principles might possibly be *adopted* to give a less suspected and therefore a more extensive influence to its *political reasonings* ; and in the following extracts may be found some existent grounds for this supposition. " We congratulate Mr. Simeon on his mode of analysing a sermon, which we doubt not will in due time lead him to sound knowledge. He will by degrees examine more accurately every position, and he will not some few years hence, speak so *positively* and upon such weak grounds on *eternal* damnation, as he has done in the skeleton of this discourse."* I think this not the language of a Review zealous for the peculiar, the discriminating doctrines of christianity ; and it is rather improbable that so professed an infidel as Pr—stley should be held up in such partial language as the following, by a periodical publication,

* Critical Review, part 1st. for 1797, page 353.

really inimical to his principles, either political, or *religious*. "Every liberal and humane mind to whatever political party it may incline, will rejoice that the author of this work has found an asylum abroad;* and every christian of whatever denomination, will

* Critical Review, part 1st. for 1797, page 47.

Every humane mind, I should rather imagine will think the Reviewer's Remark an illiberal libel upon the inhabitants of Birmingham, who would assuredly have continued to have increased the Doctor's fortune already rendered handsome by their munificence, if the consciousness of having contributed to the ignominious death of his loyal but mistaken Neighbours had not sunk the Bully into a coward; and sent him with an evident degree of uneasiness upon his conscience, into merited though voluntary exile.——The Doctor it seems does not much admire his present romantic asylum; though his hands have been certainly better employed in holding the plough in the wilds of America, than in subverting the harmony of society in England; yet this tickles not his vanity, and alas! "give me fame" is the Doctor's motto, all his labours, for he has the merit of indefatigable industry in a bad cause, appear to have an eye to this—how depressing to such a mind perpetually reflecting upon better days, when surrounded by his myrmidons, he dictated to ministers and kings, and had his dictates echoed and re-echoed through the annals of literature! how depressing to such a mind it must be, to be cooped up in a little paltry conventicle in America, which serves occasionally for a Sunday or a weekly school! The Americans are neither to be cajoled out of their money nor liberty, by this political Quack, and his whirligig nostrums. In truth from the last accounts I had of the Doctor, it seems that he is sinking fast into a querulous disappointed, but unimproved old Man, who has already outlived his short lived popularity, and whose unsettled faith enables him to look forward with certainty to nothing but the merited curses of posterity already irretrievably doomed to suffer under the woeful reverses occasioned by shallow thinking and philosophic vanity.

be pleased to see that still *zealous for the cause of religion*,† *Dr. Pr—stley* resists the attacks of the infidels, on the other side of the Atlantic. And again,

† Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas,
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Definat in piscem mulier formosa superne ;
Spectatum admitti risum teneatis amici ?

It is about twelve years since he began to be distinguished among the Dissenters from the established church of England. He preached up a kind of DEISM, which nobody understood, and which it was thought the Doctor understood full as well as his neighbours. This doctrine afterwards assumed the name of Unitarianism, and the RELIGIEUX of the order were called, or rather they called themselves, Unitarians. The sect never rose into consequence ; and the founder had the mortification of seeing his darling Unitarianism growing quite out of date with himself, when the French Revolution came, and gave them both a short respite from eternal oblivion.

Those who know any thing of the English dissenters, know that they always introduce their political claims and projects under the masks of religion. The Doctor was one of those who entertained hopes of bringing about a Revolution in England upon the French plan ; and for this purpose he found it would be very convenient for him to be at the head of this religious sect. Unitarianism was now revived, and the society held regular meetings at Birmingham. In the inflammatory discourses, called sermons that were delivered at these meetings, the English constitution was first openly attacked ; and doctrines were there held forth subversive of all civil and religious order. The press soon swarmed with publications expressive of these principles. The Revolutionists began to form societies all over the kingdom, between which a mode of communication was established, in perfect conformity to that of the Jacobin clubs in France.

Nothing was neglected by this branch of the Parisian PROPAGANDE to excite the people to a general insurrection. Inflammatory Hand-bills, Advertisements, Federation Dinners, Toasts, Sermons, Prayers ; in short, every Trick that religious or political Duplicity could suggest, was played off to destroy a Constitution which has born the Test, and attracted the admiration of ages ; and to establish in its place a new system fabricated by themselves. COBBETT.

“The style and manner of Dr. Pr—stley are well known, *equally perspicuous*, he places his sentiments in the *plainest* manner before his hearers.”*

—*—*—*—*—

* As to his talents as a writer we have only to open our eyes to be convinced that they are far below mediocrity. His style is uncouth and superlatively diffuse. Always involved in MINUTIÆ, every sentence is a string of parentheses, in finding the end of which, the reader is lucky if he does not lose the proposition they were meant to illustrate. In short, the whole of his phraseology is extremely disgusting; to which may be added, that even in point of grammar he is very often incorrect.

As a proof of what I have here asserted, I could give a thousand sentences from his writings; but I choose one or two from his answers to the addressers, as these pieces are in every body's hands: and not to criticise unfairly, I shall take the first sentence I come at. It runs thus:

“Viewing with the deepest concern, as you do, the prospect that is now exhibited in Europe, those troubles which are the natural offspring of their forms of government, originating indeed in the spirit of liberty, but gradually degenerating into tyrannies, equally degrading to the rulers and the ruled, I rejoice in finding an asylum from persecution in a country in which those abuses have come to a natural termination, and produced another system of liberty, founded on such wise principles, as, I trust, will guard against all future abuses; those artificial distinctions in society, from which they sprung, being completely eradicated, that protection from violence, which laws and government promise in all countries, but which I have not found in my own, I doubt not I shall find with you, though I cannot promise to be a better subject of this government, than my whole conduct will evince that I have been to that of Great Britain.”

This is neither the *STYLE PERIODIQUE*, nor the *STYLE COUPE*; it is I presume the *STYLE ENTORTILLE*; for one would certainly think that the author had racked his imagination to render what he had to say unintelligible. This sentence of monstrous length is cut asunder in the middle by a semicolon, which, except that it serves the reader by way of half-way house, might be placed in any other part of the sentence to at least equal advantage. In fact, this is not a sentence; it is a rigmarole ramble, that has neither beginning nor ending, and conveys to us no idea, but the author's incapacity. COBBETT.

It appears perfectly natural for me, in consequence of this obvious partiality, to endeavour, in the course of our present enquiry, to trace out a family likeness betwixt our Review, and this ill-fated Doctor, for if this should happen to be particularly striking, shall I naturally consider my work, as far as it relates to the Critical Review, nearly upon the finish. In part the third of this publication, for the year 1794, page 546, we are favoured with this manly, sensible extract, from a book, intitled, *The Life and Crimes of the Duke of Orleans*; and with the consequent illiberal critique upon it. "Always when we hear declamation against the pretended despotism which reigned in France, we cannot help smiling; and this smile is not that of Democritus, but the exhalation of a crowd of sentiments, and ideas, which appertain to reason, to experience, and to the knowledge of the human heart.—Will they say that the form of government established in France; and subsisting for so many ages was despotic?—Did the sovereign enjoy arbitrary power?—Were there not laws to which he himself owed the first submission; and which he could not violate? This principle being established it is evident, that if the laws were sometimes violated by the delegates of authority, it is not the form of government which is in the fault; and that consequently there was no occasion to destroy the form in order to prevent violations. Why then sap fundamental bases which even guarded against despotism; and on which the French Empire reposed, and flourished so long? The abuses alone should have been corrected and all agreed

in this point. The responsibility of ministers, a new order in the finances, some reforms dictated by a wise and enlightened œconomy ; in fine, the relief of the indigent class of people, which would indeed have been a natural consequence of these measures ; such were the principle means which ought to have been employed, salutary and efficacious in their nature, the will of their sovereign would have rendered them permanent."

So far this sensible writer, we come now to the critique upon it. " Pretty declamation, and worthy to be bound up with Cardon's ironical Defence of Nero. It is well known that the nobles refused to grant any proper reform ; and were determined to preserve all the ancient abuses ; and as nothing was granted, every thing was taken. Such is the infatuating nature of power, that liberty is generally bought with blood. Charles the first, would at last have granted all, but all would not be taken as a grant ; for the vanquished cannot grant. May a beneficent providence amidst the progress of political experience, avert a repetition of such evils in this country, and may *those rash men*, who now treat measures which are necessary to the happy duration of our constitution, as the *imagination* of sedition, *learn to concede* before an *enlightened people*, amongst whom liberty has always prevailed, at the last pour on *accumulated mass* of indignation upon their devoted heads.

This to a common reader certainly sounds ~~like~~ like " George's devoted head in a basket ;" but we

will now hear what the *doctor* will say upon similar subjects—" *Things are already in such a train,** that though no man can foresee the particular time and manner of the change in favour of Unitarianism, we may be *as certain* of its taking place, as if we actually saw it accomplished, and till things are perfectly ripe for such a *Revolution*, it would be absurd to expect it and in vain to attempt it."

The Doctor's political connexions are pretty well known; and, these ascertained, there seems now but little difficulty in knowing where to class the Review. We will however for fear of the smallest mistake be at the further trouble of examining how very *impartially* it conducts itself towards the Doctor's respectable friend Mr. Cobbett of Philadelphia, for if we find it equally tender to him as to the gentleman in question, our foundation will necessarily fail in a very material instance. The mode of proof is indeed varied with regard to the Critical Review; but we are aware that the public is fond of variety; and we propose leaving it to their own ingenuity, and good sense, to try every mode of conviction, we may adopt, by applying them *severally* to all the culprits in turn.

In the Critical Review upon that celebrated work, "*Thoughts on the emigration of Dr. Priestley*," the critique is throughout replete with the most illiberal animadversions grounded, the Reviewers say, upon the abuse bestowed by Mr. C. upon (their friend) the Doc-

* Importance of Free Inquiry, page 41.

tor ; now the fact is, Mr. C. in his pamphlet only bestowed a gentle flagellation upon one of the most abusive writers that ever disgraced the annals of literature, who received no more than his strict due in the measure he had so frequently meted out to others, for the Doctor even made a merit of *seasoning* his contravertial writings with personal abuse ; and was not ashamed to make such men as Beattie,* Oswald,† and Balguy,‡—Objects of his effrontary and virulence, men as far superior to the Doctor's *little sophistic meanness* as their integrity was to his abominable maxims of expediency.——But if it had not been so, ought the *Judges* in a *Court of Literature*, to have disgraced themselves through the fervour of their party zeal, to a level with any contemptible scurrilous scribbler ? The truth is this, Mr.C. in the pamphlet before us, ap-

* If arrogance and insolence be an indication of pride, Dr. Beattie, has no small share of it, though it may hitherto have escaped its own search. Modest Dr. P——'s examination of Reid, Beattie, &c. page 26.

† As to Dr. Oswald whom I have treated with the least ceremony, the disgust his writings gave me was so great that I could not possibly shew him more respect. Indeed I think him in general not entitled to a grave answer, and accordingly have for the most part contented myself with exhibiting his sentiments without replying to them at all. Modest Dr. P——'s Examination of Reid, Beattie, &c. page 26.

‡ What must people think to see those who are appointed to instruct them in the principles of religion and morality, solemnly subscribing to articles of faith which they are known to disbelieve and abhor ; and who among the clergy that read and think at all, are supposed to believe one third of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England ? I have so good an opinion of Dr. Balguy's GOOD SENSE, notwithstanding the futility of this performance, as to think it is a thousand to one but that he himself is an unbeliever in many of them. Priestley on First Principles, page 214.

pears to be a genuine christian, a zealous patriot, a true philanthropist, and an able man. Their partiality to the Doctor's principles is in this instance obvious. I support my assertion by an appeal to their own disgraceful language, "We have probably bestowed more attention upon this pamphlet than it may be thought to deserve. It is certain that in point of scurrility, falsehood, impudent and unfounded assertion, the Author puts all competition at defiance,

None but himself could be his parallel.

And a pamphlet which no good man could read without complete disgust, might have been dismissed with the brevity of contempt."

This, depend upon it, is all because Mr. Cobbett is a vigorous opposer of the *grand conspiracy*; and as far as can be determined from his writings, a truly, good, and honest man: So much however for the candour and impartiality of this Review: We come now to its *veracity*, "It is still however necessary to add, continue the Reviewers, that although it is said to be printed at Philadelphia, there *are circumstances*, which *induce us to believe*, that that country has not the *disgrace* of producing its author. From internal evidence, from the occasional affected turgidity yet general vulgarity, and petulance of the style, from the total disregard to decency and liberality, from the redundancy of unqualified assertions, and the unblushing logic that deduces positive conclusions from known falsehoods, we do not hesitate to ascribe it to the pricking of that *stiletto*, which has more than once been employed to confute men's principles by stabbing their characters."

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Now I honestly declare I have my reasons for believing this whole paragraph a designed falsehood, fabricated for the sole purpose of emitting party rancour and studied abuse with the uncharitable design of prejudicing, and that in the most unfair manner, the public mind against this incomparable pamphlet; and they are first, that I believe the courage of the Critical Reviewers, and the gains which this Review produces, (so fond are the people of purchasing the most deleterious poison from quacks of all descriptions,) to be such, that I am fully convinced, they *durst* not have hazarded *such an attack* upon *such a man*, if they had not been tempted to run the risque from the fallacious hope that they were safe in point of *distance* from the keen strokes of his vigorous pen.

And in the second place it is observable that an artifice similarly mean is made use of to discredit the striking confession of Mr. Watt, made with eternity full in view.—It is however pleasant to think that low cunning is not unfrequently defeated by the meanness of its own artifices; and it is highly probable that an abused public will ere long know as well to determine the degree of *credit* due to the assertions of this Review, as they have already been taught to do to those nefarious diurnal and weekly journals, which have long been as certainly doing the drudgery of the conspirators, as they have been distributed by them throughout the kingdom in an *unusual secret way*.

It is indeed comfortable to a contemplative mind, friendly to the human race, accustomed to dwell long and often upon its own family sorrows, as well as the

miseries of the wretched Emigrants, to observe the eyes of the nation at length completely open to the dangers with which it was menaced; and to notice the tide of opinion, too long diverted by faction from its natural course, setting in so strongly against the conspirators, "that England our native country, amidst not only the wreck of Empires, but Social Order itself, promises fair, surrounded alas! by ruins, to continue the Land of RELIGION, LIBERTY, COMMERCE, and AFFLUENCE.

We advert now to the Monthly Review,—in which the critique upon, The Considerations on the Proclamation of Governors, &c. (which appears to have been the production of one of the *illuminati* abroad) runs thus, "We wish the *Austrian* and *Prussian* Troops could read these considerations, many of them might thereby have their eyes opened to the *iniquitous designs* of their arbitrary *Leaders*, and *might* be induced to lay down their arms. Then much blood might be saved, the shedding of which however *calmly* it may be considered by *Kings** and *Princes*, must deeply afflict the feeling mind of every good man, and sincere christian, even if the cause of *liberty** should *ultimately prevail*, and much more if the *cause* of *slavery* should be *triumphant*."†

The later sentiments in this quotation, and the dress in which they appear are so exactly analogous to those we found in a Fast Sermon which I had before occa-

* * The reader will clearly find in the above extract, LIBERTY and KINGS placed in direct opposition to each other,—is any thing further necessary to prove the Monthly Review, decidedly REPUBLICAN?

† Monthly Review, Vol. 9, page 99.

sion to examine, that I hesitate not in attributing them to the same hand, and this leads me to recollect an assertion which I have frequently heard some time ago—that the two *Fathers* of the *unfaithful* were mean enough to practice a low mode of deception upon a generous but unwary public, by *reviewing each others works* for the vile purpose of giving them an unmerited celebrity; but I had no conception before I entered upon this examination, that this was a general systematic plan acted upon by all the Reviewers, in this abominable scheme, with the most diabolic of all designs.—I am now however convinced that it is not impossible for these *honourable* men even sometimes to *review their own dear precious morsels*, to gratify their predominant vanity, and give a deadly influence to the poison they collected at W——ton and H——y, with the benevolent purpose of treating us with such a dish of liberty as is served up for their constituents by the present rulers of France.

With regard to the further connexions of this Review with the conspirators, the artful manner in which it endeavours to laugh the people out of their well grounded fears of the conspiracy, is very much to our purpose. In their critique upon, *The Correspondence of the Revolution Society in London, with the National Assembly, &c.* they begin, “What impudent Rogues these members of the Revolution Society must be! after being convicted by Mr. Burke, of having engaged in a conspiracy with the Enemies of their country, “for a purpose nothing short of subverting the whole Constitution of Great-Britain;” they have the effrontery not only to avow but justify their wicked

plot, and to publish their correspondence in the face of day !——From this correspondence it appears that the members of a vile faction at home, have combined with a faction no less vile abroad ; and that they have mutually bound themselves by the most solemn promises, and declarations, to expose by every argument in their power, and to use their utmost influence in discountenancing all tyranny, corruption, bribery, intolerance, war, and bloodshed, in their respective countries ; from which it is manifest if they succeed in their daring attempts, that three very *ancient* and notable *crafts*, viz. that of the Politician, that of the Priest, and that of the Warrior, are in no small degree of being set at nought—Such is the evil brought to light &c. &c.”

This I conceive to be an artful mode of doing mischief, it has however so happened that time has sufficiently developed the designs of the Reformers in France, and Ireland ; and consequently, the artifices of the Review in endeavouring to conceal them in England ’till the plot was executed stand in this instance completely exposed ; nor is their approbation of the Grand Conspiracy less obvious both from the style of their critique and its declarations. We find indeed in this Review, many excellent sentiments, as we generally do in the most diabolic performances, for vice itself is always administered with a mixture of apparent good to make it for *a moment* lovely. We find likewise a great deal of specious sophistry, which the limits prescribed to our pen allow us not to expose in the manner we could wish ; we must therefore rest contented with having suggested at least a few particular modes of examination, by

which the UNION may be as assuredly traced through a certain description of British Literature, as through the assemblage of United Irish, who have published the disgraceful duplicity of British Senators, in the strong language of insurrection and rebellion.

Of the New Annual Register it is sufficient to intimate that the reader will find the same opinions in politics approved, and the same facts endeavoured to be substantiated in history, as he has already found in the UNION REVIEWS ; and as he may likewise find in every publication issuing from the same contaminated source. It is I think an indubitable fact, (I take Doctor Priestley in part for my authority ;) that a host of writers has been for years systematically arranged to sap the foundations of society, and undermine christianity for the express purpose of overturning the British Constitution, (many of them educated as I hinted above with this intent) some in novels, some in plays, some in poetry of various shapes, and sizes ; and that their publications have been diffeminated with a sedulity unparalleled in any other age of the world : that pocket-books, newspapers, and hand bills, have been made the vehicles of sedition through the Land ; nay that metaphysics, law, history, religion ; and all kinds of literature have been artfully contaminated with the principles of treason, and rebellion ; and from this I think is evident that a scheme exactly similar to that described by Robison as existent in Germany, by Barruel as extant in France is vigorously proceeding against our best interests.

This being the case it is undoubtedly the duty of every literary and religious character, who has no hand in this

infidious business, immediately to rally round the constitutional banners, to make a common cause in defence of religion and real liberty. If it is a duty to resist every attempt at enslaving the body, it can be no less so to resist that system the object of which is to enslave the mind: If the conspirators have clandestinely endeavoured to monopolize an influence over the booksellers and literature in general, by means of the Reviews, our first step is to attack these publications, and remove all prejudices in their favour as soon as possible from the public mind. If they have introduced these periodical works into the public libraries instituted for the purpose, with a view of gradually overturning right principles, let us use our endeavours to counteract this intention in the most effectual way, that every independent man coming out as a writer may once more be assured of a fair and candid hearing; and since in these times religion is evidently made a mask, particularly amongst the dissenters, for the worst of purposes, let the more truly religious reflect that since the facility of procuring books has become general, and the practice of reading much more universal than it used to be, let the truly religious I say, consider that the duty of a christian minister no longer consists *only* in addressing his audiences frequently upon the ever important subjects of the gospel from the pulpit, for it is assuredly in these awful, and critical times, his absolute duty, if possessed of abilities for the conflict, to attack the infidel in his strong holds of literature with the torch of manly reason in one hand, and the word of God in the other; he will thus armed soon find the enemies intrenchments imaginary like the enchanted castles of old; or transitory like the mountains which are compelled by

omnipotence to flee before the strong faith of a real christian: but if we neglect to administer the antidote from the press as well as from the rostrum, the poison, which as already been so artfully infused by a nameless variety of publications, and repeated over and over in almost every possible form through the medium of the Reviews, will insinuate itself in secret; and we shall have the melancholy reflection, upon observing unwary minds misled into error, to enhance our sorrow *that in preaching only, we have neglected one half of our obvious duty to preserve them from it.*

I call then upon every individual whose conscience preserves its integrity, and, who has had the fortitude in thinking for himself, to resist the artifices by which he has been besieged, to take his stand individually in the ranks which have already stepped forward in opposition to this nefarious scheme, and that immediately; and where opportunity offers let combinations be entered into to oppose the monstrous attempts: Let every honest man feel himself bound no longer in any way to encourage or circulate publications evidently in the interest of the *grand conspiracy* against religion, liberty, and property: Let him be warned by the example of France and let him press that example upon the minds of the ingenuous who have been misled, as containing a clear practical and explicit answer to the sophistry, political, metaphysical, legal, and moral by which their unwary minds have been unhappily darkened. The *experiment* has been actually tried, which these boasters called for in opposition to the declared opinions of men of greater depth of thought; and the result is fairly known to be **POLITICAL DESTRUCTION.**

FINIS.

